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SPECIAL GROUP MEETINGS - CUBA

29 December 1962

1. Mr. Bissell notified the Group of plans for five supply drops in the next three days.
2. Mr. Bissell gave the broad outlines of a two-pronged plan for proceeding with certain limited covert activities directed against the Trujillo regime. He emphasized that although support would be given to the Figueres group, there is no intention of establishing a paramilitary force as such, since this would be impractical in view of requirements for Cuba. He also emphasized that the proposed actions would not of themselves bring about the desired result in the near future, lacking some decisive stroke against Trujillo himself.
3. The Group agreed with the proposal as outlined and felt that it should be mentioned at the Tuesday meeting. It was noted that Mr. Pawley feels that overt intervention in the Dominican Republic should be mounted simultaneously with the Cuban operation. The consensus of the Group was that this would not be entirely consistent. However, it was agreed that the plan is worth beginning at this time no matter what the eventual decision on overt intervention may be.
4. Mr. Merchant reported a brief conversation he had had with Mr. Gray's associates this morning. The latter had made two points: (a) it would be desirable to obtain the cooperation and support of individual Latin American governments, (b) it would be desirable, if possible, for the U.S. to break relations with Cuba, in concert with other countries, some time before January 20th.
5. Mr. Merchant also said that he had come to the firm conclusion that it would be impossible politically to carry out three days of pre-invasion bombing in Cuba. All members of the Group agreed; Mr. Bissell said the concept has been revised to include only one day before the invasion.
6. Mr. Douglas then outlined his understanding of the general outlines of the overall plan for Cuba. Mr. Bissell agreed that this understanding was an accurate one. Mr. Douglas questioned the possibility of expanding the initial beachhead into a full-scale takeover of the government. Mr. Bissell said that our thinking is that this will not be possible unless

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one or all of the following situations develop: (a) overt support, (b) a major revolutionary uprising, (c) massive use of air support.

7. It was agreed that care should be taken as far as possible to avoid any possibly-abusive uprising on a comparatively small scale, such as the proposal made by a group of internal dissidents to seize an airfield and port near Havana.

8. Mr. Douglas said that it should not be assumed that Defense could not move quickly in support of covert operations. He acknowledged the fact that various subordinate elements of the DOD structure can slow things down considerably, but said that the top Defense echelon could cut through this if necessary.

9. Mr. Dulles reminded the Group that the President of Mexico had expressed a desire to meet with him. He said he proposed to visit that country on a vacation in January and that he hoped at that time to arrange a secret meeting with the President. He said he would like to talk to Mr. Mann before the trip. Mr. Merchant thought this would be useful. Mr. Dulles pointed out that this contact might provide a means of obtaining facilities in Mexico for the Cuban operation.

10. Mr. Merchant suggested that Messrs. Willauer, Mann and Barnes might usefully be present at meetings of the Group which included discussion of Cuba.

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